DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 696 PS 009 515

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TITLE Oakie Lucy: On Community Involvement. Instructional Module IV.
INSTITUTION Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee.; Okaloosa District School System, Crestview, Fla.
PUB DATE Aug 75
NOTE 80p.; For related documents see ED 141 360-362

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Involvement; Community Resources; Community Role; Elementary Education; *Family School Relationship; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Learning Modules; Open Education; Parent Education; Parent Participation; School Community Cooperation; *School Community Relationship; *Teacher Role; Volunteers

ABSTRACT

Designed to help elementary school teachers who wish to "open" their classrooms, this learning module describes how the curriculum can be enhanced through the use of community resources (people, materials and places). The module provides information on the identification and utilization of these resources. The module is divided into four main sections: School-Home Communication (conferences, home visits, problems); Parent Education (the "open" concept, child growth and development, family resource center); Classroom Volunteers (recruiting, utilizing, training) and the Community as a Learning Lab (field trips, resources and their utilization, field experiences). Included in each section are practical suggestions for the teacher. (BD)

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ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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MODULE IV

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS"

INSTRUCTIONAL MODULE:

OAKIE

LUCY: ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Preface

For the past ten years Okaloosa County's elementary school personnel have engaged in self study and school improvement for accreditation by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. They have participated in action research and national longitudinal studies in federal programs such as ESEA, Title I, Reading-Learning Disabilities, and Follow Through and have done extensive study through state- and locally-funded projects.

As a result, a group of teachers felt the need to share some of the beliefs and practices that proved successful for them during this period of study and experimentation. These modules were developed as a means of disseminating their findings.

The first module attempted to stimulate you to examine your attitudes and beliefs about children and how they learn. The second module provided a basis for you to make <u>real</u> changes in your teaching style, your classroom environment, and in your children's education. The third module helped you to understand the function of curriculum in the open classroom. This module is designed to help you tap a very large resource that is at hand to assist you in "opening" your classroom and providing a stimulating, motivating and active learning environment - this resource is the community.

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING MODULES

Module I Oakie Lucy: On Learning

This module deals with the philosophy of open education. It begins with an assessment of the teacher's beliefs about children and how they learn. Theory is tied to actual classroom situations to make ideas practical to teachers. The module provides an attitudinal base upon which the following modules are structured. It is recommended that the modules be worked through in sequence beginning with this one.

Module II Oakie Lucy: On The Learning Environment

Practical suggestions for room arrangement, materials selection and establishment of learning centers are provided. This module is intended as a "how to" for teachers ready to begin "opening up". In addition, helpful assistance is given in the areas of pupil-teacher planning, teacher planning, evaluation, and classroom discipline.

Module III Oakie Lucy: On Developing Concepts and Skills

Module III deals with curriculum within the framework of the open classroom. It provides experiences to assist the teacher in thinking about the curriculum as a whole. Concepts like the "integrated day" are fully expanded to encourage the teacher to "break away" from rigid content and specific time schedules. Useable activities are suggested to motivate children's participation without sacrificing their acquisition of concepts and skills.

Module IV Oakie Lucy: On Community Involvement

For a classroom to be truly open, community involvement is a must. This means the involvement of people within the community in the classroom as well as involvement of children within the community. This module will help teachers make good use of community resources to make their classrooms exciting places to be. Use of volunteers for classroom assistance and instruction is stressed. In addition, the teacher is helped to broaden her view by viewing the community as a viable learning environment.

PROSPECTUS

Title -- On Community Involvement

Rationale --

Modules I, II and III have given the teacher the WHAT, the WHY, and the HOW TO for developing the "open classroom" approach to learning.

Teachers wishing to "open" their classrooms and to provide a stimulating, motivating and active learning environment face the common problem of finding volunteers to lend a helping hand. Module IV is designed to help the reader tap a very large resource that is at hand: *the community*.

Terminal Performance Objectives

By working through Module IV the teacher will be able to show how curriculum can be expanded through use of community resources, identify community resources and utilize community resources.

PRE-ASSESSMENT

Directions: Write brief answers to the following questions:

1. What group is most overlooked by educators?

2. What are the purposes of school-home communication?

3. List some vehicles for two-way communication between school and home.

4. Describe the role of the teacher, the parent, and the administrator in the two-way communication process.

5. Why are parents often reluctant to participate or communicate with schools?

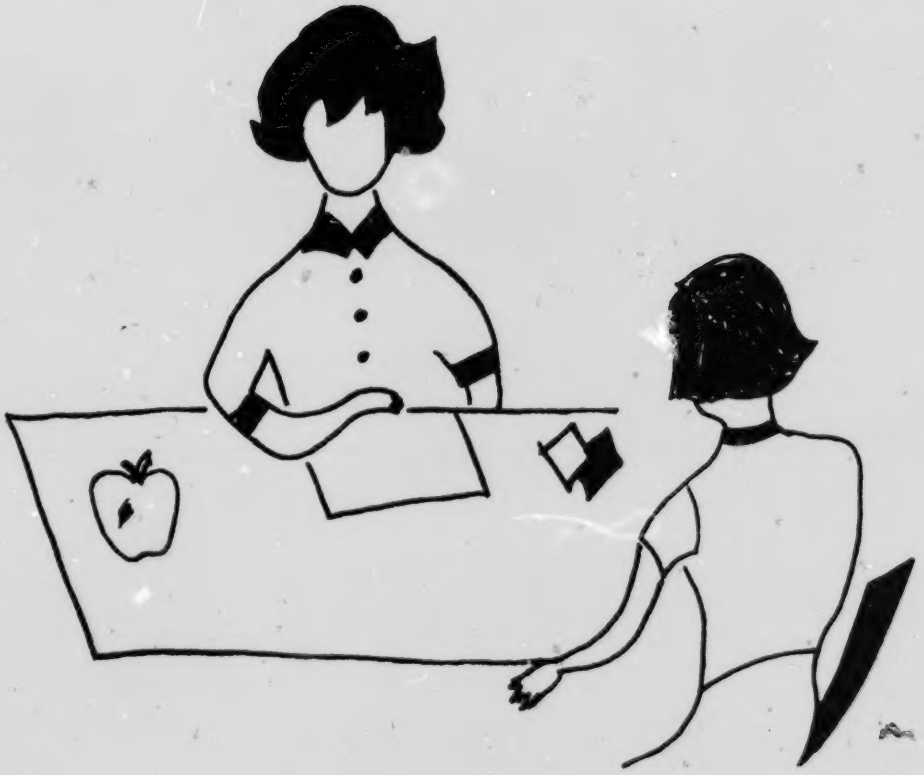
6. What is the teacher's role in parent education?

7. List the steps for implementing a volunteer program.

8. How can the classroom be expanded to the community?

Scoring: Set aside your answers until you have completed the module.

SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION



SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION

Teachers wishing to "open" their classrooms and to provide a stimulating, motivating and active learning environment face the common problem of finding volunteers to lend a helping hand. Module IV is designed to help the reader tap a very large resource that is at hand; the community. Community resources can be classified as people, materials and places. For the teacher, tapping human resources might very well be the best place to begin incorporating community resources in the curriculum. Additional help in or out of the classroom is always appreciated!

Parents of children within a classroom or school can be a vital part of the instructional program. Getting parents meaningfully involved and utilizing their talents fully requires: communication, training and planned participation.

All those who work with children have long recognized the need for cooperation of parents in the educatior of their children. Since school programs have been extended to provide new and varied educational experiences for youngsters; cooperation, not only with parents, but also with the service organizations and agencies of the community is a pressing need. School programs which involve the combined services of many community agencies in the areas of health, education, nutrition and social services will benefit the youngsters and serve to strengthen the family unit as well. This approach will involve more than teachers and parents working together to improve educational opportunities for youngsters! It will require a spirit of cooperation and careful planning by members of community services and agencies and school personnel, at all levels, in

order to present a well coordinated program which is designed with the needs and the resources of the community in mind.

The segment of the population most overlooked by educators is the parents. The problem with overlooking them is that the parents really make a difference in the success or failure of new programs. This is particularly true as you attempt to move toward open concept education. It is important that parents understand that open education is responsible education; that teachers are concerned with children's learning as well as their happiness. We must help parents to understand the open concept through a carefully planned program that will inform and involve them. We can benefit from parent perceptions of what the educational program should accomplish.

The purpose of school-home communication is:

A. for parents to "see the school".

B. to teach parents what they need to know about the school.

C. to carry out guidelines for advisory committees.

. . . . . .

Did you have trouble choosing an answer? Good! None of these are really correct. Even though we hope good public relations comes from a good communication between home and school, parents do need information about the role of the school. It is important to carry out guidelines for advisory committees. The purpose of school-home communication is for parents and teachers to understand their mutual problems, find possible solutions, and to share knowledge and information to help children grow. The real purpose is to provide what is best for children. The system must provide realistic two-way communication. Teachers profit from information parents have about their children. Parents profit from the

knowledge and information teachers have about children. Children profit from the understandings gained by both parents and teachers.

Which of the following are valuable vehicles for two-way communication?

A. Parent-teacher conferences

B. Special events visits

C. Open Houses

D. Home visits

E. Use of parents as volunteers

F. Bulletins or newsletters to parents

. . . . . .

All are good ways to provide the needed two-way communication and should be used. The important thing to remember is that effective parent-teacher relations are not fostered by meetings that are too-formal and too-structured. For instance, if the parent-teacher conference or the special events visits are the parents' only contact with the school, the parents do not feel that they are really a part of, or needed by, their children's school. All kinds of vehicles for bringing two-way communications between home and school are important and should be used.

Conferences

Consider, then, that conferences are one of the ways in which effective communication can be realized. Group conferences, held early in the school year, bring together a teacher and the parents of his pupils. It's a golden opportunity to give parents the answers to general questions about school. Group conferences take many forms. One of the most popular types is a combination "get acquainted" and "preview of what's to come". In this kind of conference, parents and teacher get to know each other better and parents learn from the teacher about the curriculum for the school year.

In an effective group conference, everyone plays a role. Children might help their teacher plan the content of the meeting and the invitations, though most authorities agree that pupils should not be in attendance at the meeting itself since the discussions will be on an adult level and probably not understood properly by pupils. They should understand that the group conference will not be concerned with their specific achievements, misdeeds, or virtues. They should know that their parents are coming to learn more about school.

Choose from the following, ways in which you think parents could most effectively participate in a group conference.

A. Asking questions
B. Listening
C. Looking
D. Participating in a two-way dialogue

. . . . . .

Great! That is, if you chose all of the above. You may have others to add to this list. Please do!

Now that you know the role of the parent, let's see what you believe about the role of the teacher. Which of the following best state the role of the teacher in a group conference?

A. Planning and carrying out the conference

B. Making a 20-40 minute presentation on the overall program of his class

C. Talking about individual pupils of parents in attendance

D. Being ready to answer basic questions from parents

. . . . . .

If you agree with all except C you have some good ideas about the role of teachers in group conferences.

In addition to the group conference, the individual parent-teacher conference serves a somewhat different purpose. In this conference the parent brings his own very special understanding of what the child is like at home, while the teacher brings an insight of what the child is like at school. With these two perspectives in focus, everybody gains--especially the child.

Individual conferences require more preparation than group ones, but if they are well planned and tactfully conducted, your work will be easier and more effective later. Good conferences help both you and the parent understand the child. They result in cooperative planning for the child and win understanding and respect for you and the school.

If your conference is to be successful there are some techniques that should make it go smoothly. These are listed in detail in the NEA

publication called "Conference Time for Teachers and Parents". How do you feel about these as tips for a good conference?

A. Act the way you want the other person to act. (If you want enthusiasm, be enthusiastic yourself)

B. Think and talk positively.

C. Be able to listen to others in a sympathetic and understanding way.

D. Be free with praise.

. . . . . .

We agree if you think all of these are important to an effective conference.

Home Visits

Another important avenue of good two-way communication is the home visit. The first idea that pops into a parent's head when he discovers a home visit by his child's teacher is forthcoming is:

A. My child has a real problem that the teacher is coming to discuss.

B. My child is failing.

C. The teacher knows that I'm by child's most significant person, so she wants to know me better.

D. The school has a special need that I will be able to help with.

. . . . . .

In a percentage of cases, A and B would be the first responses of the parent. But a good school-home relationship could elicit C or D.

Whether the parent-teacher conference takes place at school or home the educator must try to accurately perceive the feelings of the parent. Being able to perceive the feelings of parents, and having the ability to respond with empathy, respect, warmth, concreteness and genuiness can help counteract A and B. Fortunate you may be if you have parents who respond to an invitation to visit with response C or D.

All home visits should be scheduled in advance of the visit in order to give the mother an opportunity to be ready to welcome her child's teacher. Visits by teachers are for the purpose of getting acquainted and of fostering happy relationships.

To make a success of the home visit the teacher should genuinely appreciate the role of the parent. She should realize that most parents are doing the best they can in terms of insights, motivations, and aspirations. The parents were the child's first teachers and they recall what a slow process learning often was. Parents usually realize that the teacher has a difficult job, that she has a genuine concern for the child's welfare and that her purpose for visiting the home is to develop working relationships with the parents. Most parents know that a child's needs can be most adequately met when his home and school environments are brought into a harmonious, supporting relationship. The education of a child demands a full partnership representing the significant adults in his life.

No one influences children as do their parents. Many studies support this statement. U. Bronferbrenner strongly states:

> The evidence indicates that the family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of a child. The evidence indicates further that the involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program.

E. S. Schaefer states:

"Ideally, professional education will provide support for family education of the child. Schools are necessary but not sufficient for the education of the child."

"Parents are eager for knowledge about their own child. They want to know:

-about his school activities.
-how he responds to other children in the classroom.
-how other children respond to him.
-how he gets along on the playground.
-what he particularly enjoys or dislikes about school.
-whether the teacher takes a personal interest in him.

Parents need to experience the thrill of knowing fully what their children are doing and to have the opportunity of watching them participate in school activities. Teachers can make this possible."

*** Sayler, Mary Lou
Parents: Active Partners

Sometimes parents are reluctant to participate in their children's school programs because

A. They are too busy.

B. Parents are fearful of the school.

C. Parents feel it is the job of the school to educate the children.

D. Parents do not feel needed at school.

E. Parents have conditions and demands of the home that preclude their participation.

F. Parents are not interested.

. . . . . .

Yes, all of the answers may contribute to non-participation by parents - but B, D, and E are probably most responsible. B and D are those that can be changed by school personnel.

Problems in School - Home Communication

Parents often are fearful of the school situation and the teacher. Some parents recall their own unhappy experiences in school and thus are fearful of participating. Some parents feel teachers do not appreciate the difficulty of parenthood and that teachers blame parents for the child's failures in school. Some parents feel they do not have the ability to make a useful contribution. A warm responsive teacher who is aware of the needs and fears of parents and makes an effort to help parents to move toward closer communication and participation will feel rewarded for this effort. By participating in the classroom, parents will discover what the role of the teacher really is, learn many things about their own children, and will be made aware of many new ways of dealing with their children's behaviors.

Now let's consider another hindrance to parent involvement. Often parents do not feel needed at school because:

A. Many teachers do not allow parents to actively participate and they feel that what they are asked to do is merely busy work.

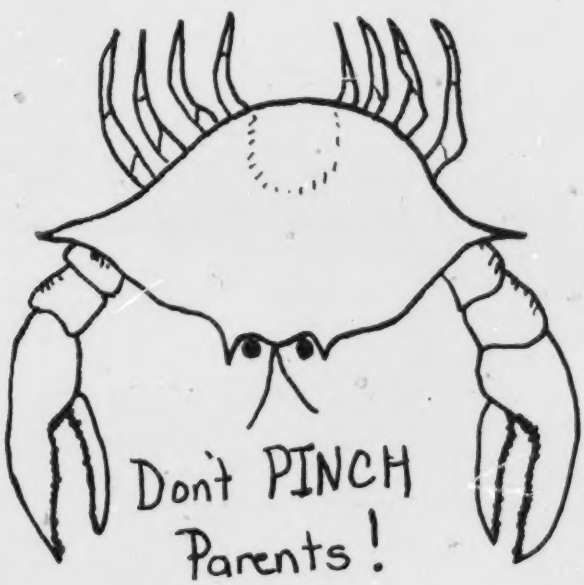
B. Too many adults are already involved in the classroom.

C. They do not have the ability to work with children.

. . . . . .

A is probably the reason. Teachers have a responsibility to provide volunteers with responsibilities that are important and to teach them how to provide the service they are asked to do. Using volunteers in a classroom carries responsibilities for teacher!

Teachers often conclude when parents do not come to school for meetings or special events or "just to get involved" that they don't care about their children. As teachers, we focus on what goes on in the school. Communication with parents, even our home visits, are for the purpose of getting parents involved in our program. How often do we, as teachers, turn this around and truly get involved in the parents' program. We need to open communication lines so that we know what conditions and demands might preclude parental involvement before we label parents as "disinterested." The school program may, in many instances, be only a small part of the total family organization.



Name 5 other conditions or demands that might prevent parental involvements.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

. . . . . .

As you well know, many answers are possible. Did you think of some of the following:

-Care for younger children not in school
-Lack of transportation
-Employment of both parents
-Lack of "proper" clothing for visiting school
-Feeling of inadequacy caused by lack of formal schooling
-Family illness
-Inability to schedule home responsibilities so they have the time
-The number and complexity of human problems pressing the parents make it difficult for them to see school participation as important
-Parents who feel culturally different than majority of parents are fearful of involvement
-Mobility of parents make it seem unimportant

As parents become involved and recognize the true partnership of the school and home, they will tend to ask the teacher for information on child growth and development patterns. As a teacher, you are the authority! Why not share that knowledge with parents?

Sometimes to be really effective for children, teachers are called upon to extend themselves beyond the classroom. A method for doing this is home visits. If parents cannot come to the school, perhaps the teacher

can go to the home. At this point the support of school administrators becomes important.

Choose from below the responsibilities of school administrators:

A. Support teachers in their public relations efforts.

B. Use paraprofessional people to free the teacher to make parent contacts.

C. Provide a suitable place for parent conferences to be held.

D. Make information about the students, the school, and its programs available to parents.

E. Recognize teachers as professionals.

. . . . . .

If you found all of these necessary, we agree. Because there is no formal preparation for working well with parents and the community and no reward or penalty for those who do or don't, it is vital that the teacher have as much administrative support as possible.

Ethics and School Policy

Classroom teachers can become front-line interpreters, building foundations for public support of the school by developing a warm, strong relationship with parents. Internal conditions must provide the kinds of encouragement and the opportunities necessary for these public relations activities. School administrators are responsible for creating the all important atmosphere in which public relations of classroom teachers can grow.

With or without administrative support, the teacher who shows that extra spark of interest in students and in teaching receives dividends that are too great to be measured.

In review, consider some of the following as helpful ways to "open the door" for communication.

A. Invite parents who may be questioning the work or behavior of their children to share a positive, informal experience. An example is a parent that is questioning why their six year old isn't reading may be invited to look at some interesting art work or some activities at which time the teacher describes the developmental stages leading to reading and how his or her child is progressing.

B. Send a note home with a child that tells parents how special you find their child.

C. Visit a home for a special occasion - a new baby, a new pet, view a special task performed by the child, etc.

D. Plan to call each parent once or twice a year just to chat about how they feel about their child's school.

The importance of the teacher knowing the child's home and understanding the circumstances to which he must adjust out of school cannot be overemphasized. A well-prepared teacher should gain sufficient insight into

family life in the community to be able to make suggestions as to ways in which the family life may implement the school program.

Which of the following questions address themselves to concerned teachers?

A. What are the resources of the community and of families which might implement the school program?

B. What are the attitudes of the parents toward education?

C. What are the individual problems that parents are apt to have?

D. What is the political and economic outlook of the community?

. . . . . .

Yes! The answers to all of these give the well-prepared teacher insight into family life in the community. Without this kind of information teachers have insufficient knowledge to make recommendations for educational implementations.

A two-way communication system establishes a rapport that prevents misunderstandings on the part of parents about the school or teacher and the teacher about the home and parents. Doubts, questions, concerns and fears can be expressed and solved. School policy and ethics can be explained and support gained from parents.

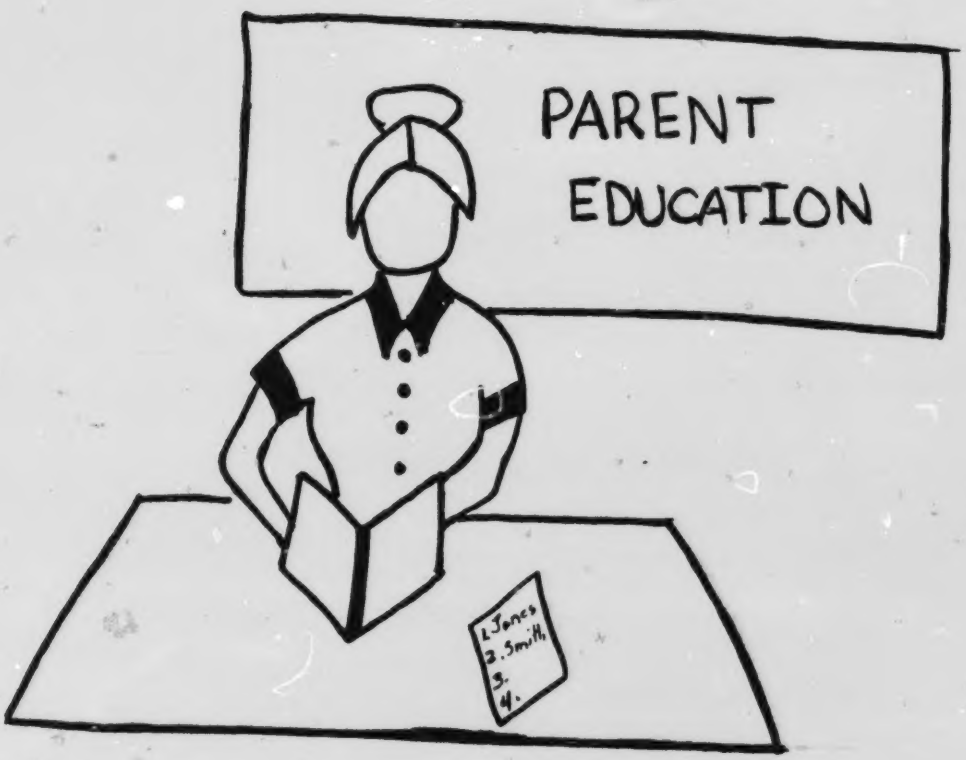
READY! SET! GO! Get busy on that two-way communication system between you and your parents. Here are some practical suggestions:

A. Get to know each family - their interests, concerns, problems, desires, etc.

B. Make yourself available to parents.

C. Establish a rapport that lets parents know that you feel that their ideas are worthwhile. It is reassuring for them to know you are not a critic but a partner.

REMEMBER! You need parents, *AND* they need you.


PARENT
EDUCATION
1. Jones
2. Smith
3.
4.

Educating for the Open Concept

In order for parent education within the open concept to be meaningful you must first clarify the rationale for the program. Meetings must be well planned and effectively carried out. Parents will want to know why the open concept is important and how it will benefit their children in terms of preparing them to function in our society.

Some questions that parents will ask, either in this session or others, follow with points that need to be stressed in answering.

1. Will there be standards, control and discipline in this program?

Stress: Yes. Standards will be developed in terms of each child's individual needs. A positive approach will be taken.

2. How will my child adjust to the more structured program of the middle school or junior high school?

Stress: He should adjust very well because of the following advantages:

a. Emphasis on development of responsibility
b. Organization of middle or junior high school
c. Emphasis on a positive self-concept
d. Emphasis on work habits and study skills

3. How will I know where my child is in comparison with the rest of the children?

Stress: Skills are developed sequentially and you will know where he is at any time in any skill area. You will be able to point out progress he's made over a month, semester, a year, or several years. It is more important to know the kind of progress the child is making than to compare his progress with that of other children.

4. How will my child be graded?

Stress: He will be graded according to his progress as a result of constant diagnosis and taught according to weakness revealed by the diagnosis.

5. What about homework?

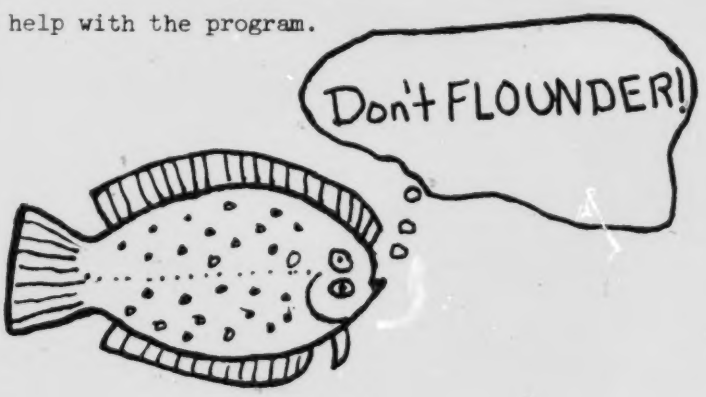
Stress: Better described as work at home. It will be assigned to reinforce skills diagnosed as weak, to provide practice in skills recently taught to supplement a study at school, or just to complete work not completed during the daily program.

Next, parents will need help in understanding terminology connected with the program. Some of the terms are:

1. team teaching
2. nongradedness
3. continuous progress
4. skill sequences
5. diagnostic testing
6. contracts
7. packets
8. learning centers
9. individualization

You may want to include a parent's dictionary for your parents.

Other important things that you will need to discuss are school organization, options for scheduling, and each area of the curriculum. Last, and most important of all, you will need to help the parents understand how they can help with the program.



The main point in the development of a program of parents education is to know what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. Be sure to plan your program so that there is a sequence to it. The basic idea is to keep the parents informed so that they feel as though you are

trying to help them understand what you are doing, and that you are trying to involve them in it. Five approaches that may be used - singly - or intermixed are:

1. Reading - providing books and articles for parents to read
2. Stations - setting up stations for visitation and having parents rotate through them
3. Individual parent meetings - explaining the program individually as parents come in for conferences
4. Large group - meetings where the program is explained
5. Small group - same as 3. In addition, films, filmstrips, resource people, articles, and slide presentations are materials which may be used.

I. Example of a Parent Education Agenda

Large group sessions

Session 1. Two hours
Philosophy or rationale-Definition of terms
Questions and answers

Session 2. Two hours
Organization of the school
Scheduling in the various teams
Movie-Charlie and the Golden Hamster
Questions and answers

Session 3. Two hours-Curriculum Areas
Communication Skills
Math
Science
Social Studies
Questions and answers

This could take two sessions. Discuss how these programs will be organized and what they intend to accomplish.

Session 4. Two hours
Learning Centers and Stations
Contracts-Packets, Kits and other special materials

Start in large group and explain that you have set up stations through which the parents will rotate. Man the stations with teachers or students or both.

Session 5. Two hours
Reporting to parents, record-keeping, skill sequences
Questions and answers

Session 6. Two hours-Cultural Arts Programs
Get these teachers to explain their role in the program.
This can be done with small groups rotating.
Questions and answers

Session 7. Two hours-Parent Involvement Program
Question and answers

II. Parent Education Sessions

Mixed Approach

Session 1. Two hours-large group
Philosophy, rationale, definition of terms
Questions and answers

Session 2. Two hours-large and small groups
Large group-Origin of school and film, Charlie and the Golden Hamster.
Small group-Scheduling within each team-Each team meets with the parents of the children assigned.
Questions and answers

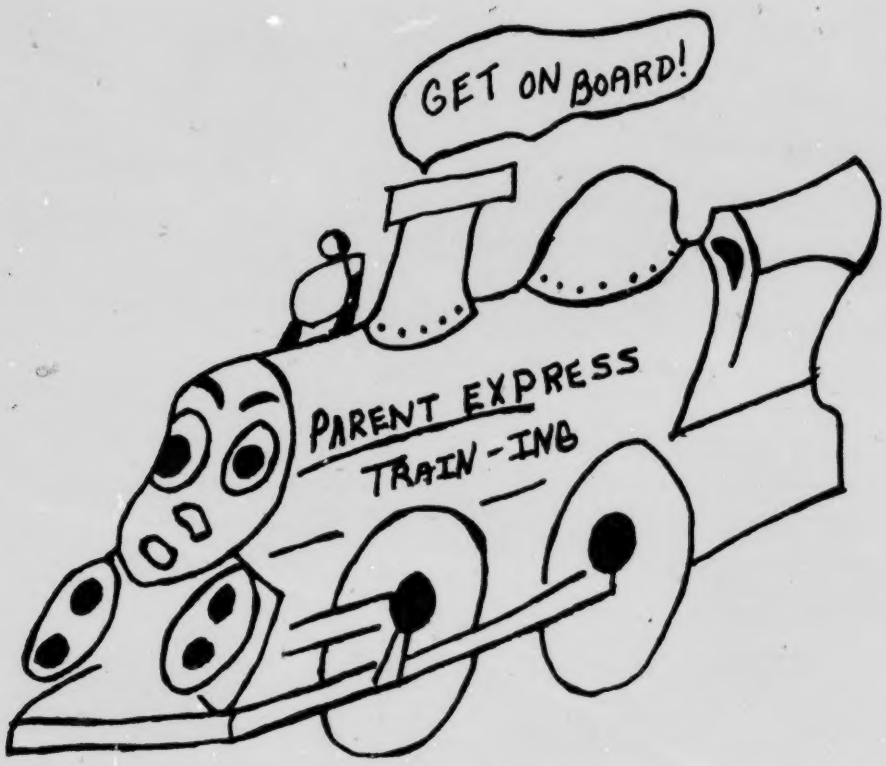
Session 3. Two hours-small group-team oriented meetings
Curriculum Areas: Communication Skills
Math
Science
Question and answers
(This could take more than one session.)

Session 4. Two hours-team oriented meetings
Learning Centers and Stations, Packets, Contracts, Kits and other special material
Questions and answers
(This session is effective if the parents are actually involved in using these approaches perhaps on a rotating basis. This could take more than one session.)

Session 5. Two hours-large group
Reporting to parents, record-keeping, skill sequences
Questions and answers

Session 6. Two hours-small group-team oriented meetings
Parent involvement
Questions and answers

These two examples will help you organize a program of parent education. Please don't underestimate the importance of such a program. Include it in your overall plan of program development. Believe us it is effort well expended-it really is!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TRAIN-ING

Educating for Child Growth and Development

In addition to educating parents about the open classroom concept, parents can also benefit from a better understanding of child growth and development and the learning process.

An enormous amount of learning is achieved by children in their homes - they explore and discover through play. Adults rarely appreciate these play activities as learning experiences. The parent and the teacher each have a unique responsibility in this relationship through the mutual understanding that the youngster's experiences in school as well as at home, can affect his behavior and learning.

The teacher can help educate parents by:

A. Contributing her knowledge of child growth and development.

B. Interpreting to parents the purposes and goals of good school experiences for youngsters.

C. Creating opportunities to help parents understand the significance to the child of exploring and discovering through play.

. . . . . .

Did you find A, B, and C all responsibilities of the teacher? Any one of the three might be good subjects, for a group conference. Let's think about C and see if we can develop materials for such a conference.

Perhaps the best method for aiding the parent is to directly involve the parent with their child in an activity-oriented situation.

Workjobs for Parents by Mary Barratta-Lorton is a very good source for development of a conference with a group of parents. The book is

filled with pictures of children and adults involved in activities. The book is comprised of 43 workjobs. Each is similar in format and includes the skills for the activity, the activity itself, how to get the activity started, ideas for follow-up questions, a picture to illustrate the activity, and a materials list.

These activities are for the younger child. A similar group conference could be planned for parents of different age students. Choice of a reference book for the conference would be made as specific needs are established. As an example, a group of parents who feel a common need to explore the special problems of the adolescent child could form a very useful study group.

Some examples of good reference books upon which to base a group study are:

Between Parent and Child, and Changing Children's Behavior
by Haim Ginott

Families by Gerold R. Patterson

Parents are Teachers by Wesley C. Becker

Child Management, a Program for Parents and Teachers
by Judith M. Smith and Donald E. P. Smith

Using a Family Resource Center

The Family Media Center is a very good way for parents to become involved in the educational process. As they participate with educators, their natural role as models for their children is strengthened. A partnership is formed between parent and teacher. The school becomes a less threatening institution; communication channels open. Teachers and parents less frequently find fault with one another; they more often find themselves working together in the interest of children.[1]

A Family Media Center would need two primary goals in focus. Number one goal, of course, would be to enhance the parent in his role. Developing a feeling of importance, a sense of unity and mutual objectives helps promote a sense of community.

The second goal would be to promote a better communication line between parent and child.

The ideal arrangment for determining the needs and wishes of parents who are to be members of this center is providing for a home coordinator. This person, because of the on going communication between parents, is able to facilitate programs and to gather data that helps in meeting individual needs of the group. Unfortunately, not many schools will be able to hire a full time person to fill this role.

One possible avenue for determining the needs of parents would be through conducting a simple survey of parents of all the children and

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[1]High-Scope Educational Research Foundation
Ypsilanti, Michigan

making priority decisions concerning findings. An educational committee could then be formed. This educational committee should include broad representation of the parent population served by the school. It should be representative of all socio-economic and ethnic groups in the school attendance area. The other representation should be teachers, aides, supportive personnel and administrators.

This educational advisory committee can play a substantial role in the planning and management of the Family Media Center. Briefly lets list a few of the activities of this committee:

1. Identifying parents and educators who would make prospective pioneers in the new endeavor
2. Deciding on the physical structure or setting for the center.
3. Outlining guidelines for the surveying of parent needs and the implementation of programs to meet these needs
4. Working with supportive persons to determine materials that would be needed in the center
5. Exploring possible funding for the project

As this body of members begins working as a committee, the need for a complete listing of all community resource persons will be evident.

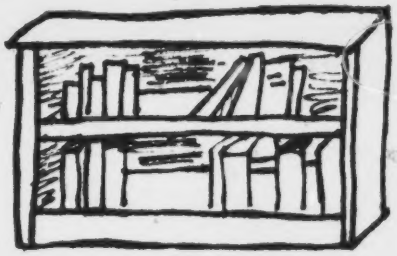
Much unnecessary time spent by individuals in determining methods for attainment of goals could be saved by mobilization of community resources. A directory of services for parents and teachers can be readily compiled by a committee. The involvement of these agencies and organizations can be a real asset to the educational advisory committee.

Thinking back to our two broad objectives; parent enhancement and child-parent communication, what are some of the basic materials needed for establishment of a Family Media Center?

Parents

Lets list a few topics of parent interest that would be considered in the selection of books for a basic library:

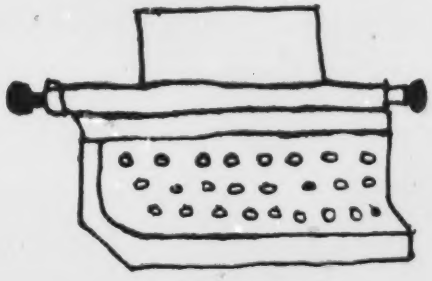
1. Health - Mental and Physical
2. Nutrition
3. Consumer Education
4. Academics - Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Humanities, and Science
5. Human Growth and Development
6. Vocational and Technical Training
7. Arts and crafts
8. Ethnic Groups



In the school media center are books on all of these topics. Catalogs listing these books would be an asset to the center. Most parents are just as busy as teachers. Information in digested form, on current topics of interest would be more readily used and appreciated by these persons.

Parents and Teachers Educational Equipment:

Can you list others?



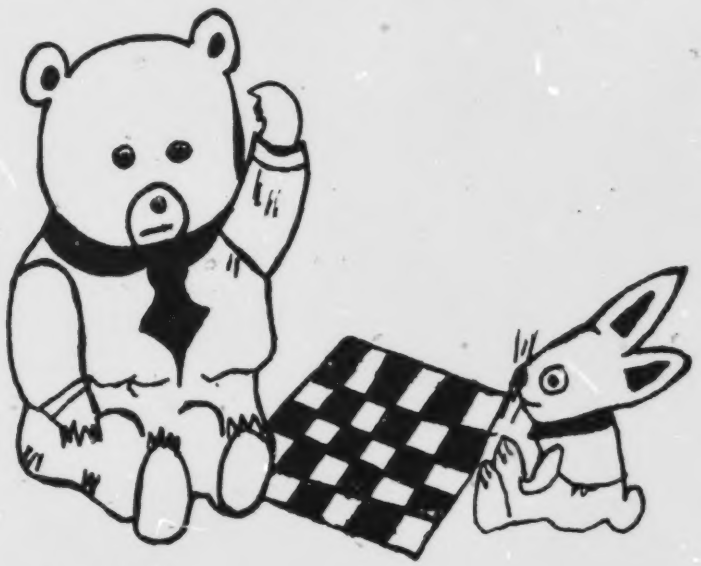
1. Typewriters
2. Adding machines
3. Sewing machines
4. Tape recorders
5. Previewers
6. Record Players
7. Wood-working equipment
8. Cooking equipment
9. Arts and Craft equipment

An alert committee would not place materials in this center that do not have a specific purpose for meeting the needs of their parents. Equipment would not be the same for any two centers, but these are some ideas to get started.

What about materials for improving and maintaining the basic child-partent relationship?

Child - Parent

In Module I we talked about the learning process. Play was mentioned as a necessary way for the active learning process of children. Toys become important in the consideration of play as a work process. Some homes and school classrooms have more toys than others. The toy-lending library is one way to put learning toys into those places where there is a need.



A basic kit for use in a toy lending library can be bought through Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Berkeley California. However, these kits cost money and this particular kit can be previewed at the Okaloosa Family Media Center, 110 Second Street, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

Of course, the study groups for parents would probably, but not necessarily take place at the center. Materials required for such workshops

should be inventoried periodically and possibly shared by several different centers. Adequate tables and chairs would assure more frequent usage of the center for group meetings.

The Family Media Center is really the home base for the parents and teachers. The ideal physical setting for the centers is a room in the community school. As a special need is determined, these two groups of persons move out into the community and its various places to arrive at common goals.

Suggested Reading for Parents and Teachers:

Dibs: In Search of Self by Virginia M. Axline

Between Parent and Child by Haim G. Ginott
Macmillan Company, New York

Schools Without Failure by William Glasser
Harper and Row, New York

Parent Effectiveness Training by Thomas Gordon
Peter H. Wyden, Inc., New York

How Children Fail by John Holt
Dell Publishing Company, New York

Young Children's Thinking by Almy with Chittenden and Miller
Teachers College Press, New York

Teaching Montessori In The Home by Elizabeth G. Hainstock
Random House, New York

CLASSROOM

VOLUNTEERS

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

Never have so many things been asked of classroom teachers. And the future doesn't look much brighter in terms of decreasing the scope of the responsibilities of the teacher. For example, movement away from self-contained classrooms creates a need for time to plan with other adults involved in the education of children. New curriculum programs require teachers to become familiar with new materials and new methods. Innovative programs necessitate an increased amount of careful record keeping. Federal programs bring new materials which take time to learn to use correctly. Accountability emphasizes every child reaching his potential and makes individualized instruction imperative.

The complexity of the teacher's role makes it mandatory that teachers find personnel to help them carry out many of these functions.

As outlined by the N.E.A. in their publication, A Key to Better Schools, a parent volunteer program can be the answer to:

1. Meeting the needs of individual children more fully, making the educational program more flexible and thus more child-oriented through increased personal attention and assistance.

2. Developing a cooperative partnership between parent and teacher for the benefit of the child.

3. Enlisting and strengthening parent cooperation with the school, which will increase parent support of the school and its programs.

4. Creating an environment which encourages two-way communication between home and school.

5. Giving teachers more time for professional activities, making them more effective teachers and creating a more manageable teaching role.

6. Encouraging experimentation with new techniques such as team teaching and with new learning materials - which might not be possible for the school without volunteer assistance.

7. Providing a continuous public relations feeder system from the school through the parents to the community to create greater understanding of educational needs and goals and to form a cultural bridge in a multi-ethnic setting.

8. Allowing parents to make a significant contribution to their children, their schools, and their community.

These overall goals will give you a broad idea of the purposes for initiating or expanding your own parent-involvement program. Here is another, more specific reason.

Mrs. Thompson, a first grade teacher, has made a list of her goals and for the first semester of school. If she succeeds in giving her children all the experiences she had planned, she'd have to make a decision. Choose the best alternative for Mrs. Thompson.

A. Have tentacle transplants so she can better fit the role of an octopus.

B. Get busy and utilize the skills and abilities of the parents in her classroom.

. . . . . .

If A were possible, I'm sure many teachers would have attempted it. But there is an easier way. Many parents want to be involved, especially if they feel needed and wanted.

Recruiting Volunteers

The first step in utilizing home and community resources is to locate potential volunteers. The following sources are most promising for obtaining classroom volunteers on a regular basis:

Parents (by far the most available source)
Senior citizens groups
High Schools (home economics and child care courses)
Colleges (child development, psychology and education courses)
Volunteer Service Bureau
Church groups
Neighborhood groups
Clubs (such as Jr. Chamber of Commerce, Women's clubs, school clubs, Keyettes, etc.)

Since parents will probably be your major source for volunteers, a questionnaire to be sent home with students could have a three-fold purpose:

1. to alert parents to your program
2. to recruit parents as volunteers
3. to provide the opportunity for parents to suggest people they might know who would like to volunteer

So let's get down to specifics. First, list the goals and needs for your classroom. This should help you pinpoint the areas where parent volunteers could be of real assistance. A questionnaire written with these needs in mind could bring a bountiful array of help for you and your children. There may also be possiblities for parent involvement in areas that

you hadn't thought of, so be sure to add some more general questions geared toward skills, hobbies, experiences and interests that could also be of use in your classroom. The following example may give you some ideas.

Mrs. Thompson decided she needed help in some specific areas. Her housekeeping area would be complete if she could provide some cooking and sewing experiences. She also needed help in the construction center with the hammers, saws, nails and screws and in the music and art centers. With these specific needs in mind, Mrs. Thompson designed this questionnaire on 5" x 7" cards so she could keep them on file.

As cards are returned, Mrs. Thompson can make a file for present use and future reference. Many needs can be fulfilled through parent volunteers if they are just utilized.

front of 5 x 7 card

Dear Parents,

Our boys and girls are our most important resources. We share a common purpose - educating children. Many children need individualized attention and you have had varied experiences which can help our children grow. You can help. We need volunteers to help the teacher in ways which will allow her to provide more personal assistance to our children.

If you would like to help us in one or more of the following areas, please check and return this card to me.

_____ cooking _____ outdoor games _____ art activities

_____ sewing _____ woodcraft _____ music activities

back of 5 x 7 card

Name _____

Occupation _____

Hobbies _____

Places you have visited and could share with us

_____

Days and times you are available to help

_____

Do you know someone who might be interested in volunteering? If so please give their names

_____

Thank you,

Mrs. Thompson's 1st grade class

Utilizing Volunteers

The appropriate use of volunteers can be one of the most significant aspects of any volunteer program. Volunteers will not remain volunteers very long if they are given assignments they are not interested in or that are inconsistent with their capabilities.

The first step in deciding how to use your volunteers is to:

A. Find out in what area the volunteer wishes to work.

B. Find out the volunteer's I.Q.

C. Make a list of areas in which you need help.

. . . . . .

By all means decide where you need help first. (C) The second step is (A). (B) is a joke and a fast way of eliminating help.

Make a list of all the areas of your job in which you want and need help. ("Want" is an important word here. Many times you may have jobs that volunteers could do but you prefer to do yourself!) Included in this list

might be construction of materials you need, adult supervision of centers, assisting individual children, supervision of lunch room, testing, etc.

Once your list is made, write out a brief description of the duties each job entails. Show this list and job description to the volunteers and ask them which job or jobs they would be interested in performing.

Following is a list of services which volunteers can perform. It may give you some ideas you had not thought of for using volunteers. You may have ideas that are not listed.

-Supervising centers
-One-to-one tutoring of children with special needs
-Working with small groups to reinforce skills
-Playing reading and math games
-Writing stories dictated by the children
-Supervising indoor and outdoor games
-Supervising clean up time
-Clerical work, such as typing, duplicating and filing
-Making classroom materials
-Organizing field trips or parties
-Setting up art, cooking, sewing, woodwork activities
-Making tapes for the listening center
-Reading stories to the total class or small groups
-Supervising the classroom while the teacher works with small groups
-Talking and listening to children

Failure to define adequately the role you want a volunteer to assume is one of the major reasons for volunteers "dropping out". The second major cause of volunteers leaving is lack of interest in the assignment they have been given. That is why placing volunteers where they wish to work and training them (remember, you are the teacher) to be effective are so important.

Imagine that you need help with reading groups. Mrs. Jones, a parent volunteer,is an ex-reading teacher. She has expressed interest in working with children in the art area. Where will you place her

A. Assign her to a small reading group

B. Assign her to art area supervision

C. Assign her to playground supervision

. . . . . .

B! Her supervision of art will not help solve your problem with reading groups. But it could give you the freedom you need to work individually with children who need help with reading for a few minutes each day.

Sometimes assignments are not so easy. What if a volunteer wishes to work at a job you feel she is not suited for?

A. Tell her you don't think she will be happy in that job and ask her to pick another.

B. Assign her to the job for which you feel she is suited.

C. Assign her to the job she wants and see what happens.

. . . . . .

C may be the best choice. If the volunteer is <u>not</u> suited for the job she will more than likely see this for herself and want to change. Maybe your feeling that she was not suited for the job was incorrect, and she may work out beautifully!

It is important to periodically discuss with volunteers how they feel about their jobs. They and you need to discuss and re-evaluate the assignments. Help volunteers to feel free to discuss their feelings honestly with you.

Training Volunteers

The specifics of volunteer training will depend upon the individual situation. However, there are several elements which will be common to almost any situation.

1. Volunteers need an overview of the area in which they will work. For example, if a volunteer will be assisting a teacher using the Holt math program, he or she should be acquainted with the objectives the program seeks to attain. This will give the volunteer information which gives his work greater meaning.

2. Volunteers need to know the principles of growth and development for the age child with which they will work.

   Working with a sixth-grader on science concepts requires an approach different from one used with a first-grader. The age difference implies not only a difference in materials used but also a difference in the way the student approaches the materials.

3. Volunteers need a general understanding of the individuals they will be assisting.

   All people are different, but certain differences can be characterized. For example, younger children usually have a shorter attention span than older ones and need shorter units of work and wider varieties of activities. Some children are highly verbal, others are non-verbal. This information will assist the volunteer in remediating problems she may encounter.

4. Volunteers need to know the definite objectives to be met. In addition to having an overview of the area in which the volunteer will be assisting and the people with whom they will be working, volunteers need a clear understanding of what they are to accomplish. The setting of objectives tells the volunteer the end which should be reached within a given time. For example, if a volunteer is to help a child learn to multiply using two digit numbers she will know that when the child can multiply two digit numbers, her goal has been reached. She will not spend time trying to teach multiplication of one or three digit numbers.

5. Volunteers need specific activities to be carried out to meet the objectives. One of the simplest ways to give the volunteer a feeling of confidence when she begins her assignment is to present activities which the volunteer can use to meet the special needs of the students she will assist. Often the teacher can give the volunteer a teacher's manual or activity book with the activity she is to do marked for her or the teacher needs to write out the activity in advance.

6. Volunteers need the materials, games and ideas to be used. Along with the specific activities to be carried out, give the volunteer the materials she will need to carry out those activities. If she is to make the games or materials herself, she needs to be given the raw materials with which to work. If the volunteer is to use audio visual equipment, she must have training in how to operate the equipment and in how it is to be used in specific situation.

Now lets take a specific example. Mrs. Jones, a parent, has volunteered to assist your 1st grade class each morning during teacher-pupil planning. Check off the items below which you feel must be done before she begins to work with the children.

A. Explain the purpose of teacher-pupil planning.

B. Give her a list of the children she will be planning with along with the type of plan each child is currently making - ie Joe and Bill will draw their plan and the volunteer will take their

dictation; Mary and Tom will dictate their plan and then copy it; Suzy, Paul and John can write their plan without assistance.

C. Give the volunteer a brief description of the home life of the children.

D. Tell the volunteer which children will have problems verbalizing their plan and show her how to question them and help them to verbalize.

E. Explain the details of what you are looking for in a plan, ie the whole area in which the child will work; what he will do 1st, 2nd, 3rd; with whom he will work; the materials he will use; plan should be in complete sentences, written in manuscript, etc.

F. Show her examples of the children's plans.

G. Check to see how well she writes.

H. Give her the forms or paper on which planning is to be done.

. . . . . .

Did you check A, B, D, E, F, and H? Good! C is irrelevant. If there is a child in her group with a specific behavior or emotional problem the problem should be described but <u>not</u> the home situation. G is relatively unimportant. If the volunteer can write perfect manuscript fine, if not she may feel inferior and her enthusiasm may be diminished. If you are unsure of her ability to write, give her a copy of the manuscript alphabet.

In defining the role of the teacher in the volunteer program, the City School District of Rochester, N.Y., notes that much of what the volunteer does will depend on the teacher's judgement and attitude. The district urges teachers to establish good working relationships with their volunteers by:

-Getting to know the volunteer as a person.
-Including the volunteer in planning sessions.
-Introducing the volunteers to the students and establishing his position with them.

-Stressing methods and teaching skills that give positive reinforcement to children.
-Using volunteer services as supplements rather than as substitutes.

The following suggestions may be helpful in training volunteers

1. Keep the training practical and specific. Volunteers do not want to hear professional and educational jargon. This is a training session not a college course. Keep lecturing to a minimum.

2. Use a variety of techniques in training volunteers such as books, booklets, films, tapes as well as lecturing. If at all possible, don't tell them - show them.

3. Prepare in advance the written materials and visual aids to be used to train the new volunteers, or to be used to show volunteers how to do a specific task.

4. If possible, use experienced volunteers to help train new ones.

5. Plan for times when you and your volunteers can meet to evaluate their work and do further training if necessary. Have the volunteers evaluate themselves. Be positive and supportive. Listen to their ideas and suggestions and if possible follow up on them.

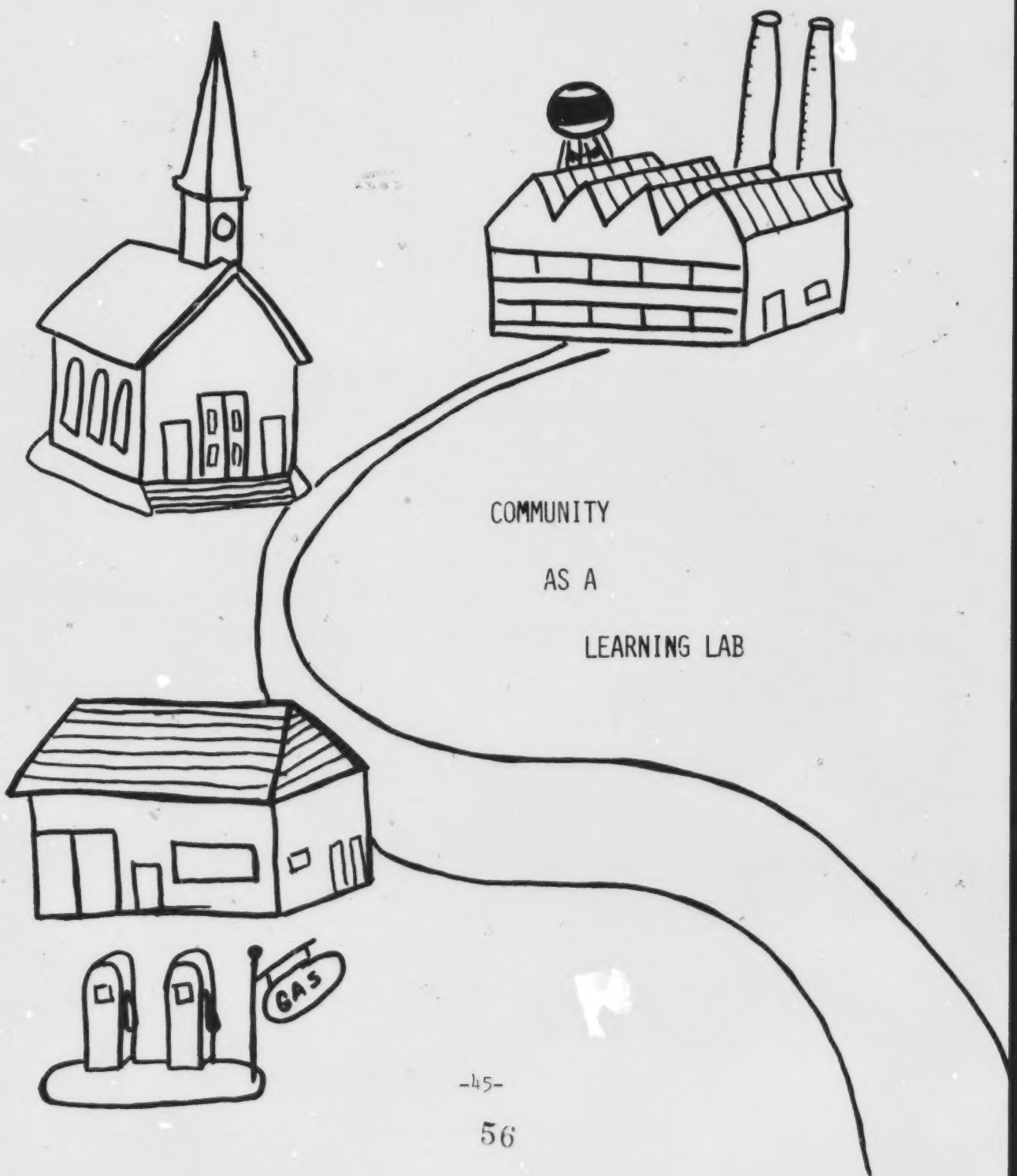
This last suggestion is one with which most teachers have problems. It is often difficult to find the time for training volunteers and for planning and evaluation. If your program is to be successful, you must find this time. Look at your own personal schedule. Perhaps before school is a good time for you, or after school. How about your lunch time? Can some planning or evaluation take place between you and your volunteer as you eat lunch together? Do you have a break anytime during the day - while the class is at P.E. or music or library? Could some training take place then? Be certain that due consideration is also given to the convenience of the volunteer.

Making a volunteer feel welcome is a good way to keep that person on the job, whereas a cold shoulder can prove disastrous. Take the case of a volunteer parent at one suburban school. The volunteer, a former teacher, tells this story about serving as a tutor for several months in her children's school:

> "My son's teacher called to ask if I could help in the classroom one day a week. Although it meant giving up a day of paid work in our business, I agreed mainly to please my son. While working at school, parents are allowed in the teachers lounge during recess and lunch. The teachers have their own coffee pot and coffee mugs. They all contribute to the coffee kitty. But, never once has a teacher - or the principal - asked me if I'd like a cup of coffee. I'd even pay for my own and bring a cup. What kind of treatment is that?"
>
> ...From School Volunteers, A Publication of the National School Public Relations Assoc.

An evaluation of your parent involvement program can take the form of individual conferences, group discussions, or questionnaires. Keep it simple and remember that your emphasis should be placed on improvement and growth. If your program is to succeed you must be flexible and open to an exchange of experiences and ideas. Through periodic evaluation, and change where necessary, your program will grow and meet the needs of the parents, children and their community.

This section has attempted to provide you with some guidelines for recruiting, utilizing, and training parent and community volunteers. This gives you the basic direction - now use your own creativity and design your program based on the needs of your children, classroom, and school. The National Education Association says it well: "It is your realization of the parent potential in your community that will mean a richer and more meaningful educational experience for all children."



COMMUNITY

AS A

LEARNING LAB

COMMUNITY AS A LEARNING LAB

Hello! How are you? I'd like to welcome you to this part of Module IV. Would you play a game with me? Would you? O.K., guess who I am!

> In some places I'm big and in some places I'm small. I can be found in many places across this country. I can be found in many different places within the same city. I am never quite the same in any two places. Sometimes I'm growing, getting big and shiny and sassy. Sometimes I'm decaying, breaking down and falling apart. Sometimes I speak Spanish. Habla Espano? In some places the mixed odors of cabbage 'n cornbread and fatback flow down my streets from tenements filled with people living on deferred dreams. In some places I'm a reservation. I can be a retirement area or a military base. In fact, I am the same and I am different every place you find me.
>
> What am I? That's right, I'm *The Community!*

Now that you know my name, let me tell you my game. First of all, I'm going to talk to you about field trips - you know, those things you take twice a year to break the monotony; however, I'm going to tell you how to take quality field trips, field trips in which you can take the best advantage of me and that's O.K. because I like to be taken advantage of. Then you will be alerted to community resources available to you and suggestions for creating your own community resource file. Finally, I will be back to talk to you about where to go in your community for ideas in involving children in real like experiences. I'll invite you to go along with me to the greatest learning environment in the world - your community. We'll look in every nook and cranny for learning possibilities and consider a few strategies for avoiding the O.K.-now-everyone-do-this-syndrome.

I hope you'll be able to see some possibilities for pulling your school and community together for the benefit of children. Heaven knows, if you're going to open up, you're going to need all the help you can get.

The above monologue was

A. a joke

B. an introduction to <u>The Community As a Learning Lab</u>

C. an explanation of the term "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" (remember that one?)

. . . . . .

B, that's right

Field Trips

A field trip is a field trip is a field trip! Right? Wrong! The open classroom concept holds that learning takes place in many settings and realizes the contribution that the community makes in educating its citizens. An open classroom teacher, therefore, involves children in the educational possibilities within the community through the creative use of field trips. Open classroom teachers are sharply aware that what children get out of field trip experiences depend on what she and the children invest in them. For this and other reasons, open classroom field trips differ from traditional field trips in that the former are:

* planned jointly by teacher and student
* purposeful
* interest based
* individualized
* frequent

These differences are important and have implications which are discussed below.

* Joint Planning

Unlike many traditional field trip experiences, teacher and student(s) in the open classroom plan jointly in making field trip decisions. The role of the teacher is to assist and guide children in the pursuit of their own goals. Occasionally the teacher may want to initiate a field trip and work with those children who express an interest. For every field trip, however, whether student or teacher initiated, the teacher has input in the planning process. If possible, the teacher should visit the place the children want to go beforehand. The teacher would want to go through

the same experiences she is anticipating for her students. This should give the teacher a deeper understanding of the learning possibilities and limitations inherent in the field trip experience.

Mrs. Billingsly has some children who have expressed interest in visiting a bank.

First of all she,

A. begins planning with the children for a trip to the bank.

B. visits the bank explaining her purpose and asks to be given the experiences the children will receive when they visit.

. . . . . .

B would be the best course of action with which to begin. In addition, the teacher is better able to guide and assist the children in the planning process.

One of the tenets of open education philosophy is that children have the ability and the right to be involved in the decision-making processes with regard to their own learning. Planning with children is a vital part of the field trip experience. When children or teacher express a desire to visit someplace you just don't pick up and go. You have to deal with the following:

How will we get there?

Whom do we contact?

How many will be going?

What will we do when we get there?

Why do we want to go?

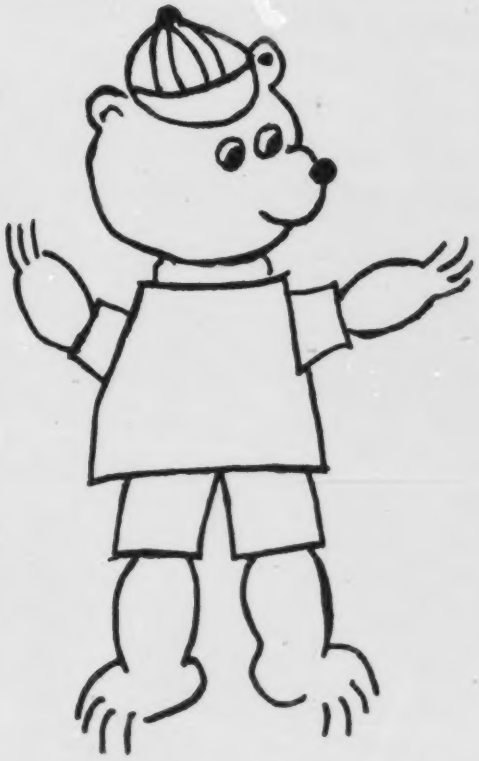
What do we want to find out?

How much will it cost?

How long will we stay?

Who will do what?

This process makes a field trip experience <u>their</u> experience by getting them involved. With the guidance of the teacher, students can organize, conduct, and evaluate the field trip. If letter writing is necessary, it's done at this time. Responsibility for telephone calls or personal visits can be delegated. Computation of expenses and clearing the trip through appropriate channels can also be assumed by children in cooperation with the teacher. Even very young children can be involved in the decision-making processes at a level commensurate with their ability.



* Purposeful Field Trips

Purposeful means that field trips grow out of some interest children have about a particular subject. In addition, purposeful means having questions in mind for which answers are being sought. When children deal with questions like "Why do we want to go there?" and "What do we want to find out?", they are dealing with purpose. Incidentally, the purpose of an occasional field trip might be just to have fun.

Teacher: Why do you want to visit a cabinet shop?

Child: I want to see how they put legs on tables.

Another Child: I want to see if they use different kinds of tools than we do.

Teacher: What makes you think their tools might be different?

Child: Because they make good wheels and I can't make a good wheel with our tools.

Another Child: I want to find out how they get their wood.

Teacher: Let's make a list of all the things we want to find out at the cabinet shop and see if we can get answers to our questions.

This teacher is helping these children establish a purpose for visiting a cabinet shop.

A. True

B. False

. . . . . .

True

---

* Interest Based

Most open classroom field trips grow out of on-going interests which children and teacher develop through daily interaction. If children are interested in playing store, the logical extension is a super market field trip. If they are interested in building things, a visit to a construction site might be worthwhile. The important thing to remember is that the teacher helps children plan field trips which grow out of their interests. As mentioned earlier, the teacher may want to initiate a field trip idea. This is fine as long as she can accept that only a few children may be interested and will plan for involvement that will stimulate interest of others.

* Individualized

Individualized doesn't mean every child takes his own field trip. It does mean that the size of a group on any particular field trip will depend on the number of children that are interested in taking that field trip.

Whole class field trip participation is the only workable strategy.

A. Right on!

B. Write off!

. . . . . .

Write off! We hope!

If open classrooms provide choice within the school then why not outside the school? If Joe and Keith want to visit the newspaper office why should everyone else have to come along?

*Frequency

Any program which gives equal importance to non-school based settings as educational centers, must, by necessity, include field trips as a regular happening in the classroom. It is a challenge to the teacher to coordinate the resources and people necessary to have an effective community-based program. Perhaps the following section will provide some ideas.

Community Resources

The teacher has a two-fold responsibility in working with the community. The first is to plan experiences and activities which help children learn about the community, and second, to be informed about the services available to the families and to share her knowledge about the children with the agencies who provide these services to the families.

In order to help children learn about their community, the teacher must be well acquainted with the resources and services that are available to the families in the community. She must be involved professionally in helping provide these services to the families when they are needed. She will have opportunities to identify physical and emotional problems of the children and to assist parents in seeking treatment and remediation for them. With her knowledge of the growth and development of individual children, she can assist community agencies in making initial contacts with the home and providing the agencies with follow-up information concerning the children. Many parents will be open to the suggestions and information offered by school personnel and will be willing to cooperate for the welfare of their children. The wise teacher will be aware of this and will seek many opportunities to demonstrate to parents the benefits of close cooperation between school and home in the education of children.

If our goal as educators is to prepare a child to be a useful and confident resident of this earth, then we must not make the mistake of isolating our school from the world around us. Neither can we isolate our school from the home. Our community - its people, businesses,

organizations, and institutions - are educational resources which can be used in helping us to achieve our goal.

Using Community Resources

Community resources are people, places and things. Every community has resources that can supplement the textbooks and other materials with real world experiences. There are people who are involved in a variety of occupations within the community. Even the smallest community will usually have a grocery store, service station or post office. There are materials, tools, equipment, facilities and ideas which can be utilized by teachers and students to enhance and extend curriculum goals.

As you drive through your community begin looking at the many businesses and services available and how they might be a possible curriculum resource for your classroom.

Community resources can be enriching and motivating. However, utilization of these resources requires planning and organization. Often times, teachers are not aware of the numerous possibilities that can be tapped as classroom resources. Also, community lay citizens are not always sufficiently familiar with a classroom situation to know how they can best contribute to the school.

Identification of community resources is an initial step in developing an effective supplement to existing curriculum. The various ways local people earn their living is significant to every aspect of community life. Local occupations can supply many forms of curriculum enrichment. A comprehensive and itemized card file of local occupations can be systematically developed for use by a teacher or teachers in a school.

Governmental agencies are another community resource to be tapped. Several levels of government operate simultaneously in nearly every community.

The local unit of government performs certain functions, while the county, state and federal governments provide others. Governmental agencies employ a large number of people. Many government workers are engaged in some aspect of collecting information and most agencies have much information to share. They also have people who can be excellent resource people for the school program and are especially trained for educational presentations.

Community service organizations can contribute to the educational program in many ways. Organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, Red Cross, League of Women Voters, Heart Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion are associated with national organizations. Others have a predominantly local orientation. Service groups are often a source of valuable consultants for the school program. Since many of these organizations have a built-in corps of volunteers, they have the additional advantage of being able to make resource people available during regular school hours.

Civic clubs can also make many valuable contributions to the school program. Civic clubs are organized to promote community growth and

development and therefore recognize the importance of a sound educational program. Very often, memberships of such groups include many of the local business and community leaders. These people have access to the kinds of local information and materials most beneficial to teachers and students. In addition, most civic clubs have education committees and many sponsor special education projects.

Within every community are "specialized" facilities - airports, colleges, hospitals, military installations, nursing homes and other places not generally categorized as business establishments.

Which of the following would be possible curriculum enrichment activities centered around the airport?

A. Asking an airplane mechanic to come visit a fifth grade class and explain his job responsibilities.

B. Taking a class for a planned tour of the airport facilities.

C. Helping children build a model airport after their visit to the local airport.

D. Reading a story about an airport in the basal reader and then asking those children who had visited an airport to raise their hand and then dismiss the subject.

. . . . . .

Which did you choose? Choices A, B and C are definitely enrichment activities. A makes use of a lay citizen as a resource person while B and C are utilizing a local facility for curriculum enrichment. On the other hand D is what often happens when teachers do not see the possibilities for extending learning experiences by making use of community resources.

A Community Resource File:

Setting up a community resource file is an arduous task but one well worth the time. Once you have a basic file in operation all you do then is add to and periodically update its contents. You might want to divide your resource file into two major sections: community services and community resources.

Under community services you would include cards on free or inexpensive services ranging from how to get food stamps to quality child care services. This section of your file would help you put parents in touch with services to better help their child. This would be an invaluable service to parents and one which would foster respect and appreciation between the school you work in and the community it serves.

The second section on community resources would be a listing of people, places, and things in the community which can help you expand your educational program. These may include people and things that can come to your classroom or people, places and things that welcome you to come to see them. You may want to classify your cards according to some scheme which is useful for you so that you can find the right service or resource when you want it. If this information is stored on 5 x 7 index cards you can store it neatly in a file box. Below are some suggestions for card format to get you started.

Format for Community Service card:

5 x 7 card

Name of agency: _____

Address: _____ Phone #_____

Service Provided: _____

Contact person: _____

Cost: _____

Eligibility: _____

_____

Notes and Comments: _____

_____

Format for Community Resource card:

5 x 7 card

Name of person, place, or thing: _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

Service Provided: _____

_____

Contact person (if necessary): _____ Position _____

Notes and Comments: _____

_____

_____

A format for parent volunteers can be found in this module in the section of Utilizing Classroom Volunteers.

Field Experience

Hello, it's me again - your community. Before you finish this module, I want to S-T-R-E-T-C-H your thinking about in-depth involvement of children in this community. The day is coming when school will serve as a clearinghouse to put students in touch with learning resources. In fact, it's already happening in some schools today. This kind of intensive involvement is what I like to call field experience. A field experience is different than a field trip in that it is longer, more concentrated and comprehensive, and more individualized.

Mr. Newman has a student (Jim) who is fascinated with photography. He checks his resource file and finds that a Mr. Land, who operated a local photography shop, has said he would like to help where he could. Mr. Newman calls Mr. Land and, makes arrangements for Jim to spend a day with him. Before Jim's visit, he and Mr. Newman discuss the purpose of the visit and the things he wants to find out. On the appointed day, Jim

arrives at Mr. Land's shop and is given a tour of the facilities. Later that morning, Jim accompanies Mr. Land to a luncheon for which Mr. Land has been hired to take photographs. That afternoon, Mr. Land and Jim work in the dark room developing their pictures. The next day at school, Mr. Newman and Jim evaluate his experience and Jim shares it with the class.

This is an example of

A. a field trip

B. a field experience

. . . . . .

B, a field experience

Well, just what can you learn from me - the community? Follow me and I'll take you on a tour of myself and show you. Here's my post office. Did you realize their work day starts at 4 a.m.? Did you know there are four basic ways of delivering mail? If you're a rural postman you have to provide your own vehicle to cover your route but the U.S. Postal service will reimburse you so much per day per mile.

Oh, here's my newspaper plant. Everyday thousands of newspapers are made here to keep everyone who lives in me informed. Did you ever wonder how much paper and ink are required daily to produce the newspapers that are printed? Do you understand what Thomas Jefferson meant when he said "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."

There's Fred, he's been a butcher for twelve years and says he could tell you "everything you want to know" about the trade. He started out as a butcher in a chain store. Now he has his own business. What do you have to do to go into business for yourself? What does "grade of beef" mean? Fred says butchers in large cities are unionized. I wonder why they aren't unionized here? Did you know that an eviscerated chicken is one that has been cleaned and has the liver, gizzard, heart, and neck in a plastic bag inside?

Well, we could go on and on. As you can see, there are thousands of things to learn in your community. Although it has already been mentioned in another module, I'd like to recommend again the Yellow Pages of Learning Resources. It's published by The MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142. It contains over seventy categories of people, places, and things to explore in the community. If you're interested in this sort of thing you'll find the investment worthwhile.

I have to go now. I have enjoyed talking to you. From here on I'm going to leave you to your own resources for learning about the educational potential of your community. I think you'll find this an exciting and rewarding task. Who knows, you might even learn something new yourself! Good Luck!

Post

Assessment

POST-ASSESSMENT

Take out your pre-test answer sheet. Review the answers. Now that you have completed the module, would you change any of your answers or would you expand some of them?

Consider the following:

1. Did you name parents as the most overlooked group?

2. Did you name the following things as purposes of school-home communication?

    1. good public relations
    2. fulfill guidelines for advisory committee
    3. understand mutual problems
    4. share knowledge and information about children

3. Did you list these 6 vehicles? Can you think of any others?

    1. Parent-teacher conferences
    2. Special events visits
    3. Open Houses
    4. Home Visits
    5. Use of parents as volunteers
    6. Bulletins or newsletters

4. All three: parents, teachers and administrators all have roles to really make effective two-way communication happen, don't they? Keep working at it - It's worthwhile.

5. Parents are often threatened by schools and are fearful of them. They expect and often receive only bad news. Can you change this?

6. Teachers are, after all, responsible for "teaching" - parents too.

7. Recheck the module for the steps. Did you leave any out?

8. The classroom is not confined by the walls of the school. Expand yours!

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